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Sierra Club submits its Response to Salt River Project's ("SRP") Request for Rehearing and Reconsideration filed in this docket on May 16, 2022 (the "Request"). The Request: 1) attempts to rewrite the history of this proceeding; 2) improperly introduces new, unverified, and inadmissible "evidence" into the record; 3) mischaracterizes SRP's well-documented dealings with the Randolph community; 4) misstates the law; 5) misrepresents the Arizona Corporation Commission's ("Commission") April 28, 2022 Order (the "Order"); and 6) proposes to altogether strip the Commission of its authority to

consider Certificate of Environmental Compatibility ("CEC") applications, all in an effort to resurrect SRP's poorly planned and hurried Coolidge Expansion Project ("CEP"). The Commission's decision to deny the CEP is on strong legal grounds. The record in this case, and the numerous deficiencies in the Application, demanded the Commission issue the Order and reject the CEC for the CEP.

In Section I of this Response, Sierra Club explains that the Commission acted legally and well within its authority when it issued the Order denying the CEC. Sierra Club highlights SRP's admission in its Request that it failed to provide studies required by law and exposes how, if accepted, SRP's legal arguments would altogether strip the Commission of its obligation to consider and rule on CEC applications. In Section II, Sierra Club explains how SRP's claims regarding evidence in the record related to the Randolph community are objectively false and misleading and must be rejected. Finally, in Section III, Sierra Club moves to strike pages of new "evidence" that SRP seeks to introduce after the record has closed and explains that the Commission is legally prohibited from considering this new information.

I. The Commission Acted Within Its Authority When It Denied The CEC

SRP argues that the Commission exceeded its authority when it rejected the CEC. That assertion is plainly false. A.R.S. §40-360.07(B) provides that the Commission "shall [] either confirm, deny or modify any certificate granted by the committee." In evaluating the CEC, A.R.S. §40-360.07(B) further *requires* the Commission to comply with A.R.S. §40-360.06 and to also "balance, in the broad public interest, the need for an adequate, economical and reliable supply of electric power with the desire to minimize the effect thereof on the environment and ecology of this state." A.R.S. §40-360.06 lists the factors that the Arizona Power Plant and Line Siting Committee and the Commission "*shall*" consider in the proceeding. The record reflects that these factors were properly considered. The statute requires evaluations of the existing site, noise emissions, visual impacts, the total environment of the area, the technical practicability of the project, and critically, the estimated cost of the facilities and site as proposed – with the express recognition that "any

significant increase in costs represents a potential increase in the cost of electric energy to the customers or the applicant."

Accordingly, the Commission is charged with evaluating the project's compatibility with the surrounding environment, evaluating the technical practicability of the project for meeting its stated objective, and finally, evaluating the costs involved with the proposed project because those costs will impact ratepayers. In this docket, the Commission's denial of the CEC was based on these factors.² The Commission found that the CEP was not compatible with the proposed site or the total environment of the area.³ It also found that the CEP could not be approved based on the estimated cost provision because the record provided no evidence detailing the CEP's impact on ratepayers or whether lower-cost alternatives were available.⁴

SRP understands that the Commission evaluates siting applications based on the criteria described above. In its request for rehearing, SRP confirms that the Commission's "decisions must be based on factors within its statutory authority to consider." To be sure, the Order is based on those factors, but SRP attempts to obfuscate that fact by making inaccurate claims about the Commission's authority, each of which are detailed below.

As explained in the sections below, SRP's application was deficient and the legal analysis SRP asks the Commission to adopt would undermine the Commission's authority, rendering the siting statutes meaningless.

A. SRP's Application is incomplete and SRP admits it never provided a power flow and stability analysis with its 90-day plan.

A.R.S. §40-360.02(B) states that "[e]very person contemplating construction of any plant within the state *shall file a plan with the commission ninety days* before filing an application for a certificate of environmental compatibility." A.R.S. §40-360.02 further specifies that "plans for any new facilities *shall include* a power flow and stability analysis

¹ A.R.S. §40-360.06(A)(8)(emphasis added).

² See Decision No 78545 at 11:18-20.

³ Id. at 11:5-12.

⁴ Id. at 10:26 – 11:4.

⁵ Request at 9:13-14.

⁶ A.R.S. §40-360.02(B)(emphasis added).

report showing the effect on the current Arizona electric transmission system." Thus, SRP is required by law to submit a power flow and stability analysis ninety days prior to filing its CEC application.

After obfuscating on this issue for months, SRP finally admits in its Request that it *never* provided this power flow and stability analysis to the Commission. In fact, SRP even emphasizes that this information was withheld from the Commission, stating that "[t]he Commission made <u>no</u> such request" for the study.⁸ (emphasis in original). A.R.S. §40-360.02(B) does not say that the study is only to be provided upon request, rather it says the plans submitted to the Commission along with the required 90-day plan "*shall include*" the study.

In addition to SRP's admission in its Request, SRP's failure to submit the study was recognized as a problem during the hearing in front of the Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee. Member Little explained, "[a]s long as we're discussing issues that are bothering us, I guess I should say, I do have one also that – and that is under 40-360.02, one of the things that should have been included in the filing with the Commission was the power flow and stability analysis reports. And to my knowledge, those are not done yet, and we have not heard anything from the applicant about when they anticipate they will be done. And this is just a concern that I have right now." In light of SRP admitting what the Committee and the Commission already knew, that the study was not provided, the Commission can feel confident in the conclusions it reached on this point in the Order.

Nevertheless, after plainly and emphatically admitting its 90-day plan did not include the required study, SRP misdirects the Commission and points to an entirely different submittal that is irrelevant and unrelated to the issue at hand. SRP points the Commission to its annual ten-year plan that is applicable to the construction of new transmission lines under A.R.S. §40-360.02(A). Critically, the ten-year plans described

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⁷ A.R.S. §40-360.02(C)(7).

⁸ Request at 11:1.

⁹See Little Tr. Vol. VI at 1094:24-1095:8.

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under subsection A of the statute are not a prerequisite for a CEC filing for the CEP, while the plans detailed under subsection B – which SRP failed to submit – are a requirement.

In conclusion, SRP admits it failed to comply with the operative law on this point and the Order is correct.

B. SRP's failure to provide the required study alone is grounds for denying the CEC.

SRP contends that the Commission lacks authority to review the power flow study in a CEC proceeding. 10 However, it is clear that SRP's admitted failure to provide the study is by itself sufficient grounds for the Commission to reject the Application. A.R.S. §40-360.02(F) provides that the "[f]ailure of any person to comply with the requirements of subsection [] B[] constitute[s] a ground for refusing to consider an application of such person." Again, the Commission is well within its authority on this point.

C. The Commission is obligated to review CEC applications, yet SRP falsely claims that this review amounts to the Commission wrongly exercising jurisdiction over SRP's "resource planning."

SRP claims the Commission's denial of its CEC amounts to improper infringement on SRP's "resource planning" decisions. This argument misstates what the Commission does when undertaking its statutorily required duty to review CEC applications.

SRP is wrong because the Commission is required to review all plant proposals and must decide whether to approve, modify, or deny them. This required review does not constitute involvement in "resource planning." SRP self-servingly mischaracterizes the Commission's performance of duties it is authorized and obligated to perform. The Commission's decision to approve or deny a CEC has numerous impacts on the applicant utility including, for example, impacts on its budget. If a utility was planning to build a plant that is rejected, the utility may need to alter its budget to account for a new allocation of its money. Obviously, the Commission does not have the authority to directly pass or modify SRP's budget, yet it would be preposterous to argue that when the Commission

¹⁰See Id. at 11:13-14

11 Id. at 14:16-18.

denies a CEC it is really infringing on SRP's right to do its own budgeting because it has an indirect impact on the money that SRP will spend. It is equally preposterous to argue here that in denying the CEC for the CEP, the Commission is really engaging in resource planning. The Commission is simply doing what it is obligated to do. To the extent the denial of this project impacts SRP's resource plans, that impact flows indirectly, and is the result of the Commission performing its statutorily obligated duties.

If accepted, SRP's argument undermines the entire CEC process and leaves the Commission unable to do its statutorily-required job. By conflating denying a CEC with engaging in "resource planning," SRP proposes to take away the Commission's authority to ever again deny SRP any CEC application. This outrageous argument must be rejected.

D. The Commission has the authority to deny a CEC if the Applicant proposes to use technology that causes the application to fail the statutory balancing test.

SRP argues that the Commission cannot consider alternative technologies when evaluating a CEC application.¹¹ However, numerous provisions of A.R.S. §40-360.06 and the balancing test required in A.R.S. §40-360.07 not only allow for, but require, the investigation of potential alternatives in order for the Commission to do its job.

For example, A.R.S. §40-360.07 requires the Commission to balance the need for economic and reliable power with the desire to minimize the effect of the project on the environment and the ecology of the state. A hypothetical helps to illuminate exactly how this balancing test clearly permits, and in fact requires, the Commission to evaluate alternatives. Take the example of two alternative technologies providing the exact same level of reliability, where Technology A has no impact on the environment while Technology B has devastating impacts on the environment and costs 100 times as much as Technology A. It is illogical to suggest that if a utility proposes environmentally damaging and hugely expensive Technology B, the Commission must ignore the availability of the less expensive and cleaner Technology A when performing its statutorily required

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balancing test. That balancing test comes out much differently if Technology B is the only alternative available for providing economic and reliable power than if Technology B is both significantly more expensive and much dirtier than an otherwise just as reliable alternative like Technology A.

In this hypothetical, it is the very existence of Technology A that renders Technology B uneconomic and unreasonably damaging, causing it to fail the test. Notably, this hypothetical is not dissimilar to the actual situation of this matter where a cleaner and even more reliable alternative exists to the applicant's proposal. Without the knowledge and consideration of alternatives, the Commission has no context within which to perform its balancing test. If every application must be viewed in a vacuum as SRP suggests, then every application would pass the balancing test because every application would represent the *only* option available. This is an absurd outcome that must be rejected.

II. SRP misrepresents its engagement with the Randolph community and misstates the record regarding the CEP's impact on Randolph

SRP continues to dismiss the concerns of the community of Randolph in its request for rehearing. In fact, SRP continues to push the project while misrepresenting the record with regard to Randolph. SRP makes two specific assertions that are objectively inaccurate in its request for rehearing. First, SRP incredibly claims that "there is no evidence upon which to conclude the community received disparate treatment as compared to a white or affluent community." Second, SRP makes the erroneous claim that "[t]here simply is no contravening evidence in the record – no site-specific studies, no analyses – to support the Order's findings and conclusions of law regarding environmental justice and health impacts to the Randolph community."13 As detailed below, SRP is mistaken on both points.

¹² Request at 2:5-8 (emphasis added).

¹³ Id. at 23:17-19 (emphasis added).

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Furthermore, the residents of Randolph have made their desires clear: they do not want the CEP to go forward.14 In fact, just last week, two residents of Randolph submitted comments to the docket voicing their continued opposition.¹⁵ Resident Mary Turner summarized the current position of the Randolph community after Decision No. 78545 was issued:

I speak loud and clear that the residents of Randolph STRONGLY, I say STRONGLY request that the Arizona Corporation Commission not reconsider SRP's request for a rehearing. Here is the position of the Randolph Residents: 1) We did not ask SRP for \$14 million dollars in mitigations, 2) We did not ask SRP for road paving in and around our community, 3) We did not ask SRP for scholarships and job training, 4) We did not ask SRP for landscaping to screen the expansion and beautify the area, 5) We did not ask SRP for \$4 million dollars in additional measures, 6) We did not ask SRP for additional road paving, 7) We did not ask SRP for home repairs and energy efficiency improvements, and 8) We did not ask SRP for a community center but what we have asked SRP is to not expand this natural gas generating facility in our community. SRP claims that they want to be a good neighbor, then if so, GIVE THE RANDOLPH RESIDENTS WHAT THEY WANT and that is "no COOLIDGE EXPANSION PROJECT" This is what will make them a good neighbor. 16

A. It is uncontroverted that Randolph received disparate treatment when compared to previous communities.

The difference between SRP's treatment of Randolph residents and the residents of other communities was discussed at length during the hearing. Specifically, the Committee heard evidence contrasting SRP's engagement with the Town of Gilbert when it constructed the expansion of its Santan Generating Station with SRP's engagement with Randolph in this case. The record shows that the treatment of these two communities was dramatically different.

In the Gilbert case, SRP entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Gilbert to address and mitigate the concerns of that community before it even filed its

¹⁴ See Randolph Residents Brief at 28:19-20.

¹⁵ See Consumer Comments - In Opposition dated May 18, 2022.

¹⁶ Id. (emphasis in original).

application for a CEC.¹⁷ And in that case, the concerns of Gilbert residents were largely the same as those of the residents of Randolph today. The Gilbert project's final CEC featured numerous conditions agreed upon by community stakeholders to mitigate the plant's visual and noise impacts, as well as to address concerns from nearby property owners regarding potentially diminished property values.¹⁸

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Conversely, residents of Randolph complained that SRP had little or no engagement

with them from the outset. Witness Melvin Moore – a 30-year resident of Randolph –

testified that he was never contacted by SRP about the expansion. 19 Instead of meeting with

the community and addressing its concerns before filing the CEC application, SRP

attempted to negotiate the project's mitigation efforts during a single break lasting less than

an hour on the last day of the Power Plant and Line Siting hearing. As a result, the

Committee tried to adopt some of the Gilbert CEC's conditions to the CEP CEC.²⁰ Those

last-minute efforts proved difficult, however, because Randolph was not afforded the lead

time that Gilbert had. As Member Gentles observed, "when you go back and look at the

Gilbert CEC, they clearly had extensive conversations before they came to the CEC

deliberation, on what they were willing to do. That is just not evident here in this

treatment is unarguably false: SRP made the effort to meet with stakeholders in Gilbert and

reach a detailed agreement with them regarding mitigation efforts before applying for a

CEC. In stark contrast, here the record clearly reflects that Randolph residents received

almost no meaningful attention from the utility until the final day of the hearing.

SRP's claim that there is "no evidence" to suggest Randolph received disparate

¹⁷ See Application in Docket No. L-00000B-00-0105.

^{27 | 18} See Decision No. 63611.

¹⁹ See Moore Tr. Vol. V at 860:12-14.

²⁰ See Little Tr. Vol. VII at 1399:6-12.

²¹ Gentles Tr. Vol. VIII at 1428:16-19.

Decision No. 78545 at 11:5-8(emphasis added).

²⁶ Petry Tr. Vol. III at 556:8.

B. The record is full of evidence supporting Decision No. 78545's environmental justice and health impact conclusions regarding the Randolph community.

In Decision No. 78545, the Commission made the following determination regarding the CEP's impact on Randolph:

The evidence of record shows that the proposed CEP will negatively affect the total environment of the area and state and have significant negative impacts on residents in Randolph from noise levels during construction and operation of the Project, increased lighting, emissions of greenhouse gases, worsened air quality, degraded views, and lower property values.²²

SRP now makes the incredible assertion that there is "no evidence" to support this finding.²³ This assertion is objectively false. Contrary to SRP's assertion, the Commission's finding above is supported by voluminous evidence from multiple witnesses. Evidence from the record regarding each element of the Commission's finding is detailed below.

1. The evidence demonstrates the proposed CEP will have significant negative impacts on residents of Randolph from noise levels during construction and operation of the project.

Residents of Randolph described noise emissions from the current plant as a "constant light humming" whenever the gas turbines are operating.²⁴ The problem was expected to worsen with the expansion, as the number of turbines in operation would more than double from 12 units to 28, and SRP confirmed that an increase from existing sound levels would occur.²⁵ Despite more than doubling the units in operation, SRP's consultant testified that the increased noise would be "barely noticeable."²⁶ That claim fell apart, however, after the consultant admitted that he did not know whether the plant had been

^{27 | 23} Request at 23:17-19.

²⁴ Jordan Tr. Vol. V at 908:23-25.

²⁵ See Ex. SRP-1 at I-4, Noise Impacts from Proposed Project: Conclusions.

operating any time he visited the project area.²⁷ To make matters worse, he admitted that his testimony regarding noise levels was not based on his own conclusions and that he could not verify them based on firsthand experience.²⁸ As such, SRP's witness – with no firsthand knowledge of the plant's noise emissions – made the dubious assertion that operating 16 new jet engine turbines within 1000 ft. of Randolph would be "barely noticeable" – an idea that anyone who has been near an airport would know is highly improbable. As such, the record showed that an increase in noise emissions was certain to occur, but SRP presented no credible evidence that the increase would not significantly worsen noise levels in Randolph.

2. The evidence demonstrates the proposed CEP will have significant negative impacts on residents of Randolph from increased lighting and degraded views.

Residents of Randolph testified that the current plant's lighting disturbs them at night. The light pollution is so significant that residents must keep their blinds closed.²⁹ Others complained that the lights interfered with their sleep.³⁰ Photographs of the plant's lighting at night taken from a witness's backyard were presented to the Committee.³¹ As that witness described the view, "I look over there and it looks like the city of Mesa."³²

On the other hand, SRP's witness asserted that the CEP's visual impact would be compatible with the location.³³ However, he then admitted that his analysis ignored the visual impacts of the plant at night.³⁴ Indeed, despite testifying that the CEP will not have negative visual impacts, he confessed that he had never even viewed the existing plant at night.³⁵ Thus, SRP's witness concluded that the project's lighting was compatible with the surrounding area despite never once visiting or seeing the plant at night. This finding was

²⁷ See Petry Tr. Vol. IV at 639:13-18.

²⁸ See Id. at 639:19 – 640:4.

²⁹ See Moore Tr. Vol. V at 861:21-25.

³⁰ See Id. at 862:1-2.

³¹ See Ex. RR-2

^{27 32} Jordan Tr. Vol. V at 907:14-15.

³³ See Petry Tr. Vol. III at 550:3-5.

³⁴ See Petry Tr. Vol. IV at 653:19-25.

³⁵ See Id. at 647:9-10.

that SRP did not evaluate the nighttime visual impacts of the CEP, and that residents are already suffering from the consequences of the existing plants, which would be exacerbated by the project.

directly contradicted by the testimony of local residents. Accordingly, the record showed

3. The evidence demonstrates the proposed CEP will have significant negative impacts on residents of Randolph from emissions of greenhouse gases.

Extensive testimony was presented regarding the impact of increased carbon emissions in Pinal County and on the area surrounding the plant. Intervenors Sierra Club and Western Resource Advocates each presented evidence demonstrating the importance of curbing carbon emissions immediately. Sierra Club witness Sandy Bahr testified that "Pinal County is among the counties in the U.S. at greatest risk relative to climate change when you look at the cumulative risks for heat, crop yield, economic damage, and other factors."

4. The evidence demonstrates the proposed CEP will have significant negative impacts on residents of Randolph from worsened air quality.

Sierra Club witnesses also presented testimony detailing the health impacts and costs that will result from increased particulate emissions levels coming from the CEP. Witness Cara Bottorff testified that Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") models indicate that the CEP would increase total healthcare costs between \$9.5 million and \$21.5 million in a single year. The bulk of these costs, about three-quarters, or between \$7 million and \$16 million, would be borne by people living in Arizona. Those figures represent costs stemming from increases in mortality rates, infant mortality rates, heart attacks, and multiple respiratory illnesses that will result from the exposure to air pollution from the plant. Onversely, nowhere in the record did SRP contest that the CEP would cause those

³⁶ See e.g. Ex. SC-23, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis: Summary for Policymakers.

³⁷ Bahr Tr. Vol. VII at 1194:20-23 citing Ex. SC-25.

³⁸ See Bottorff Tr. Vol. VII at 1211:24 – 1212:4.

³⁹ See Ex. SC-28, Health Impact of Coolidge Expansion, COBRA Results and NPV.

numerous health problems. Instead, SRP chose to largely ignore the project's health impacts and did not prepare any health impacts modeling to evaluate the CEP.⁴⁰

6. The evidence demonstrates the proposed CEP will have significant negative impacts on residents of Randolph from lower property values.

Intervenors also provided expert witness testimony detailing diminished property values in Randolph. Real estate economist Mark Stapp testified that because the CEP would be adjacent to the Randolph residents' properties, it would make their neighborhood less desirable. At Mr. Stapp described how development from the metro Phoenix area is now pushing substantially into the Florence and Coolidge areas, which is driving economic expansion in those areas. He went on to testify that because of the CEP, the residents of Randolph would not be able to benefit from that economic growth and instead would be precluded from it as a result of their proximity to the expanded plant.

III. Motion to Strike

The Commission is prohibited by statute from considering matters outside of the record in the siting hearing. Under A.R.S. §40-360.07(B), "[t]he committee shall transmit to the commission the complete record, including a certified transcript, *and the review shall be conducted on the basis of the record*."⁴⁴ Nonetheless, SRP makes numerous new and unsubstantiated claims in its Request that are not part of that record, have not been vetted or tested, and must not be considered. Accordingly, Sierra Club hereby moves to strike SRP's attempts to introduce new evidence into this record. Pursuant to Rule 7.1(f) of the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, motions to strike are authorized when seeking "to strike any part of a filing or submission on the ground that it is prohibited, or not authorized, by a specific statute, rule, or court order." A.R.S. §40-360.07(B) prohibits the Commission from considering any facts not in the record of the proceeding in front of the Siting Committee. This motion to strike is therefore appropriate.

⁴⁰ See Watt Tr. Vol. IV at 668:19-21.

^{27 | 41} See Stapp Tr. Vol. VI at 1064:14 – 1065:13.

⁴² See Id. at 1064:7-13.

⁴³ See Id. at 1065:7-13.

⁴⁴ A.R.S. §40-360.07(B) (emphasis added).

As SRP states in the Request, "[d]uring the eight-day evidentiary hearing, reflected 1 in a transcript over 1,500 pages long, the Power Plant and Line Siting Committee carefully 2 considered the testimony of 23 witnesses and even more public commenters."45 3 Nevertheless, despite this robust record on which the Commission rightly relied in 4 rendering the Order, SRP openly attempts to supplement this record with new, 5 inadmissible, evidence, beginning on page 5 of the Request. All new facts introduced after 6 SRP writes, "[s]ince the eight-day evidentiary hearing..." must be stricken and cannot be considered by the Commission. Every sentence written between those words on page 5. line 7, through page 7, line 5 includes information and references to facts that were not introduced in any manner in the hearing.

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Further, SRP admits in its Request that it is proposing "additional conditions" related to its treatment of the Randolph community. None of these conditions were proposed in the hearing, are not part of the record, and, pursuant to A.R.S. §40-360.07(B), cannot be considered at this time. See Tilley v. Delci, 220 Ariz. 233, 238, ¶ 17, 204 P.3d 1082, 1087 (App. 2009) (The court is not required to consider evidence presented to it for the first time in connection with a motion for reconsideration.). SRP includes purported costs for new proposed measures that have not been vetted and that the parties have had no opportunity to examine. Because these items are not part of the record and cannot be considered, Sierra Club moves to strike page 8, line 10, thru page 8, line 22.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the forgoing, Sierra Club respectfully requests that the Commission enter an order; 1) striking page 5, line 7, through page 7, line 5, and page 8, line 10, thru page 8, line 22; and 2) denying the Request.

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⁴⁵ Request at 4:12-14

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 23rd day of May, 2022. 1 2 ROSE LAW GROUP pc 3 4 /s/ Court S. Rich Court S. Rich 5 Eric A. Hill 6 Attorneys for Sierra Club 7 8 Original plus 25 copies filed on this 23rd day of May, 2022 with: 9 10 Docket Control Arizona Corporation Commission 11 1200 W. Washington Street 12 Phoenix, Arizona 85007 13 I hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the foregoing document on all 14 parties of record in this proceeding by regular or electronic mail to: 15 Robin Mitchell **Utilities Division** Albert H. Acken 16 Arizona Corporation Commission Jennings, Strouss & Salmon, P.L.C. 17 aacken@jsslaw.com legaldiv@azcc.gov utildivservicebyemail@azcc.gov bert@ackenlaw.com 18 19 Adam Stafford Stephen Emedi Kathryn Ust Western Resources Advocates 20 Arizona Corporation Commission adam.stafford@westernresources.org 21 sjemedi@azcc.gov kust@azcc.gov Dianne Post 22 Randolph Residents 23 Karilee Ramaley postdlpost@aol.com Salt River Project Agricultural autumn@tierrastrategy.com 24 Improvement and Power District 25 karilee.ramaley@srpnet.com 26 27 By: /s/ Hopi L. Slaughter 28